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ABSTRACT

One of the most far-reaching results of the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142, signed into law November 29, 1975) is the increase in the number of deaf children being mainstreamed into regular public school programs. This increase in deaf children in public school programs will demand not only modification of existing academic programs to permit equal program accessibility to the deaf child, but also the development and implementation of appropriate support service systems. It is anticipated that the school counselor will emerge as the key support system for the deaf child attending a public school program. This increasingly important function of the counselor will necessitate an understanding of the specific social and psychological needs of the deaf child, and the strategies that may be employed to meet these needs. An overview of the social and psychological needs of the deaf child attending the public school system is provided. Suggestions and strategies for counseling and "outreach" support activities are offered. (Author)

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COUNSELING THE HEARING IMPAIRED CHILD IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

(A paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Conference, Washington, D.C.)

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INTRODUCTION

AS MANY OF YOU ARE AWARE, A NEW TREND IS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. THIS TREND HAS BEEN PROPELLED MAINLY BY THE PASSAGE OF THE EDUCATION OF ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ACT (OR PUBLIC LAW 94-142), WHICH WAS SIGNED INTO LAW NOVEMBER 29, 1975.

THE IMPACT OF THIS LAW HAS GROWN STEADILY SINCE THAT TIME, AND IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN FELT WITHIN THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF THIS COUNTRY WITH INCREASING TEMPO, DUE IN PART TO THE RISING ADVOCACY OF THE HANDICAPPED CONSUMER, PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF THE HANDICAPPED, AND ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THIS POPULATION. THIS ADVOCACY CULMINATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS WHICH WAS HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C. IN MAY, 1976. AS A RESULT OF THAT CONFERENCE, A FINAL REPORT WAS COMPILED AND THREE WEEKS AGO ON MARCH 2, WAS PRESENTED TO MRS. CARTER, ACTING ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT CARTER, AND TO SECRETARY CALIFANO AS WELL AS SELECT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPORTING LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND ADULTS.

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THE POINT BEING MADE HERE IS THAT EVERY SCHOOL IN THIS COUNTRY CAN EXPECT WITHIN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE TO ABSORB A VERY SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF DISABLED CHILDREN, MANY OF WHOM WILL NEED SPECIAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO INSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE "LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT," CLAUSE OF THIS PUBLIC LAW.

WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION OF THE DEAF, THE LAW HAS ALREADY RESULTED IN A LARGE NUMBER OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN BEING MOVED FROM STATE OR LOCAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FACILITIES INTO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF THAT LOCALITY. IN CERTAIN STATES, THIS INTEGRATION OR MAINSTREAMING AS IT IS COMMONLY CALLED, HAS RESULTED IN THE CLOSING OF SOME RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FACILITIES. WHILE THE TOTAL PROPORTION OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN ATTENDING A GIVEN SCHOOL MAY BE RELATIVELY SMALL, THE FACT REMAINS THAT MORE AND MORE PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL WILL BE FACED WITH THE TASKS OF EDUCATING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES TO HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN

WITH THIS FACT IN MIND, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS BE PREPARED TO ABSORB THIS SPECIAL POPULATION. BY PREPARATION, I MEAN THE VARIOUS SCHOOL PUBLICS: TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, STUDENTS, AND THE LIKE, SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS, THE SPECIAL ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN MAY FACE. THOSE OF US IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION HAVE FOUND THAT THIS TASK OF PREPARATION, STIMULATING PUBLIC AWARENESS, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, FALLS ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR, AS IT IS OFTEN THE COUNSELOR TO WHOM THE CHILD IS SENT WHEN HE MISBEHAVES OR DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE FUNCTIONING WELL IN THE CLASSROOM.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU, SOME INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE COUNSELING TECHNIQUES TO THE DEAF CHILD ATTENDING A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

THE TERM HEARING IMPAIRMENT IS USED IN A BROAD AND OFTEN MISLEADING FRAME OF REFERENCE. ALL ONE CAN ASCERTAIN FROM THIS LABEL IS THAT AN INDIVIDUAL HAS SOME DEGREE OR TYPE OF AUDITORY IMPAIRMENT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE OF THE DEGREE OF HEARING LOSS A CHILD HAS AND THE IMPLICATIONS THIS LOSS HAS FOR EDUCATIONAL AS WELL AS COUNSELING PURPOSES.

FROM AN AUDIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE HEARING IMPAIRED CHILD WHO HAS A LOSS OF 20 db OR LESS HAS WHAT IS TERMED A SLIGHT HEARING LOSS. THIS CHILD HAS THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND ALL BUT THE FAINTEST WHISPER. THE CHILD'S ABILITY TO FUNCTION IN A GROUP COUNSELING OR ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING SITUATION IS EXCELLENT. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THIS DEGREE OF LOSS MAY PASS UNDETECTED IN EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CHILD WHO HAS A 40-60 db LOSS WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE PROBLEMS COMPREHENDING SPEECH AND LANGUAGE, PARTICULARLY IN LARGE GROUP SITUATIONS. THE USE OF AMPLIFICATION HELPS TO SOME DEGREE, AS DOES SITTING CLOSER TO A SPEAKER, OR HAVING A SPEAKER TALK LOUDER. SMALL GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS OF FEWER THAN 10 MEMBERS IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. USUALLY THE CHILD WITH THIS TYPE OF LOSS FUNCTIONS ESPECIALLY WELL IN A ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING SESSION WHERE LIPREADING SKILLS, AND A SLOWER RATE OF TALKING ON THE

PART OF THE COUNSELOR CAN BE COMBINED TO FACILITATE COMPREHENSION. SOME GROUND RULES TO OBSERVE IN A GROUP COUNSELING OR GUIDANCE SETTING INVOLVING A CHILD WITH THIS DEGREE OF LOSS ARE

A. ENCOURAGE THE GROUP TO SIT CLOSER TOGETHER.

B. ENCOURAGE GROUP MEMBERS TO WAIT UNTIL A PERSON HAS FINISHED TALKING BEFORE SPEAKING. OVERLAPPING CONVERSATION CAN BE CONFUSING TO A HEARING IMPAIRED CHILD WITH THIS TYPE OF LOSS.

C. USE A WELL-LIGHTED ROOM WHERE THERE ARE NO OBSTRUCTIONS TO VISION. FOR EXAMPLE, GLARE FROM A WINDOW OR OTHER VISUAL DISTRACTIONS.

D. ENCOURAGE GROUP MEMBERS TO SPEAK WITHOUT MUMBLING OR COVERING THEIR MOUTHS.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE CONTINUUM WE HAVE THOSE CHILDREN WITH SEVERE AND PROFOUND HEARING LOSSES, AND IT IS THIS GROUP WHICH REPRESENTS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO ALL OF US IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING.

THE CHILD WITH A SEVERE HEARING LOSS RANGING FROM APPROXIMATELY 60 TO 80 db, OR A PROFOUND HEARING LOSS OF OVER 80 db's, HAS EXTREME DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING SPEECH AND LANGUAGE, EVEN WITH THE USE OF AMPLIFICATION. IN ADDITION, THOSE CHILDREN WITH SEVERE LOSSES ARE NOT ABLE TO PERCEIVE THE SOUND OF THEIR OWN VOICES WHEN SPEAKING. THE USE OF A HEARING AID MAY HELP THIS, BUT COMPREHENSION IS NOT

DISTINCT. BECAUSE THESE TWO KINDS OF LOSSES REQUIRE VERY SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES, A MAJORITY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN CAN BE FOUND TO HAVE EITHER OF THESE TYPES OF LOSSES. A LARGE NUMBER OF THESE CHILDREN RELY ON A METHOD OF MANUAL COMMUNICATION KNOWN AS THE SIMULTANEOUS METHOD--A SYSTEM OF SIGNS, FINGERSPELLING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE. THIS SYSTEM IS ALSO KNOWN AS "TOTAL COMMUNICATION." STILL OTHERS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR TRAINING IN PROGRAMS THAT RELY PRIMARILY ON AMPLIFICATION, SPEECH, AND SPEECHREADING, OR THE "ORAL METHOD," AS IT IS CALLED. A THIRD COMMUNICATION METHOD FOR SOME DEAF CHILDREN IS THE CUED SPEECH METHOD, WHICH UTILIZES 12 HAND SIGNS FORMED AROUND THE SPEAKER'S MOUTH. THESE HAND SIGNS ARE USED TO CLARIFY AMBIGUOUS PHONETIC SOUNDS.

IN A SINGLE PUBLIC SCHOOL, IT IS NOT UNUSUAL TO FIND HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN WHO ARE GROUPED ACCORDING TO WHICH METHOD OF COMMUNICATION THEY HAVE BEEN OR ARE BEING TRAINED TO USE. THE MOST COMMONLY OCCURRING GROUPINGS RELATED TO THE "TOTAL COMMUNICATION" OR "ORAL" APPROACHES. HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF WHICH OF THESE METHODS OF COMMUNICATION IS USED BY CHILDREN WITH PROFOUND OR SEVERE HEARING LOSSES, THE FACT REMAINS THAT EACH METHOD REQUIRES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SPECIALIZED SKILL OF PROFICIENCY ON THE PART OF THE COUNSELOR, THE TEACHER, THE CHILD'S FAMILY AND PEERS, IF MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS ARE TO OCCUR.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS THE REST OF THIS PRESENTATION TO THIS PARTICULAR POPULATION OF CHILDREN, AND TO USE THE TERM DEAF IN PLACE OF HEARING IMPAIRED TO DESCRIBE THEIR HEARING LOSS.

THE DEAF CHILD IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING IS OFTEN A VERY ISOLATED CHILD. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER HE HAS ADEQUATE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE ABILITIES, HIS DEAFNESS OFTEN CREATES BARRIERS TO MEANINGFUL INTERACTION WITH HIS NORMALLY HEARING PEERS. THE SOCIAL STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH HIS DISABILITY USUALLY HAS SEVERE EFFECT ON THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT; PARTICULARLY DURING THE FORMATIVE YEARS. MANY DEAF CHILDREN FEEL THIS ISOLATION WITHIN THEIR OWN FAMILY UNITS WHERE THERE MAY BE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS. OFTEN THE PLACEMENT OF A DEAF CHILD IN A SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOM SETTING WITHIN A PUBLIC SCHOOL DOES NOT COMPLETELY ALLEVIATE THE SOCIAL ISOLATION FACTOR. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THE DEAF CHILD, REGARDLESS OF AGE, TO KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT HIS DEAFNESS, OR TO HAVE BEEN PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP HEALTHY ADJUSTMENT PATTERNS TO HIS DISABILITY. THIS CAN BE SEEN IN THE DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS OF DEAF CHILDREN WHO ARE ASHAMED TO ASSOCIATE OR BE SEEN WITH THEIR OWN DEAF PEERS. OTHER BEHAVIORS INDICATING A LESS THAN HEALTHY ADJUSTMENT MIGHT BE THE CHILD'S REFUSAL TO WEAR A HEARING AID, OR TO USE SIGN LANGUAGE OR OTHER ATTENTION-ATTRACTING RESOURCES PECULIAR TO DEAF INDIVIDUALS.

THE ISOLATION THE DEAF CHILD EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING AND IN MANY CASES WITHIN HIS OWN FAMILY, IS, PERHAPS, THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD AND CRITICAL FACTOR IN THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT. ITS IMPLICATIONS IN TERMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTHY SELF-CONCEPT, CONFIDENCE, AND FACILITATIVE COPING MECHANISMS IS GROSSLY UNDERESTIMATED.

THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR WHO CANNOT COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH A DEAF CHILD IS, OF COURSE, HAMPERED IN ANY EFFORT TO WORK WITH THAT

CHILD. IDEALLY, IT IS DESIRABLE THAT THOSE COUNSELORS WHO HAVE DEAF CHILDREN IN THEIR SCHOOL, OBTAIN AN OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO LEARN THE PARTICULAR COMMUNICATION METHODS OF THOSE CHILDREN, BUT TO UNDERSTAND THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING NATURE OF DEAFNESS WITH REGARD TO THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LEARNING OF SIGN LANGUAGE IS NOT THE FORMIDABLE OR IMPOSSIBLE TASK IT MAY SEEM TO THE NOVICE.

ALL THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE COUNSELOR WHO CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAF CHILD CANNOT DO MUCH TO ASSIST THAT CHILD THROUGH THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS. ON THE CONTRARY, THERE IS MUCH THAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP CREATE A FACILITATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR THE DEAF CHILD.

I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER AT THIS POINT SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS ALONG THESE LINES. THESE ARE STRATEGIES THAT PRACTICUM AND INTERN COUNSELORS IN OUR PROGRAM AT GALLAUDET COLLEGE HAVE FOUND TO BE NOT ONLY PRACTICAL, BUT VERY EFFECTIVE AS WELL.

1. <u>A DEAF AWARENESS PROGRAM</u>

   THIS PROGRAM COULD TAKE ON MANY FORMS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT COULD BE A SERIES OF POSTERS OR BULLETIN BOARD DISPLAYS ABOUT DEAFNESS, DEAF PEOPLE, COMMUNICATION, OR THE LIKE.

   MANY ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THE DEAF WOULD PROVIDE FREE OF CHARGE MATERIALS TO BE USED FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS.

   THIS DEAF AWARENESS PROGRAM COULD ALSO TAKE THE FORM OF A COURSE OR COURSES IN SIGN LANGUAGE. IN SOME CASES IT IS

POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR VOLUNTEERS PROFICIENT IN SIGN LANGUAGE TO TEACH THIS. IN JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS, SUCH A COURSE IS NOW BEING OFFERED FOR CREDIT IN SOME LOCAL SCHOOLS. VOLUNTEERS FROM THE GALLAUDET COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM HAVE ASSISTED WITH THIS EFFORT FOR SEVERAL SCHOOLS IN MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA.

LOCAL DEAF CLUBS ARE ANOTHER SOURCE OF MANPOWER. MANY DEAF ADULTS WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE OF ASSISTANCE. THIS EXPOSURE OFTEN HAS HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT, ALSO. AND FINALLY, ANOTHER MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING AN AWARENESS PROGRAM COULD BE TO ATTEMPT TO ENLIST THE AID OF TEACHERS IN WHOSE CURRICULUM INFORMATION ABOUT DEAFNESS COULD BE INCORPORATED WITH LITTLE ADDED DIFFICULTY.

2. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

THIS STRATEGY IS ANOTHER THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. SOME EXAMPLES ARE SIGN LANGUAGE COURSES FOR THE PARENTS, ASSISTING THE TEACHER IN SOME CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ON A VOLUNTEER BASIS FOR A FEW HOURS A DAY, OR ANY TASK-ORIENTED ACTIVITY WHERE PARENT AND CHILD CAN FUNCTION IN A RELAXED AND UNSTRUCTURED ATMOSPHERE.

THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE DEAF CHILD WILL HAVE MANY BENEFITS FOR THE PARENT WHOSE OWN NEEDS AS A PARENT OF A DISABLED CHILD ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED.

3. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

DEAF CHILDREN SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR COULD PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT AND REINFORCEMENT OF THE DEAF CHILD'S SKILLS, INTERESTS, AND ABILITIES. I CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH, THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT TO THE YOUNG DEAF CHILD OR ADOLESCENT. THE EMPHASIS PLACED ON THE CHILD'S SKILLS AND STRENGTHS DOES MUCH TO DIVERT FOCUS FROM THE CHILD'S DISABILITY OR DIFFERENT-NESS, WHICH HE CANNOT HELP OR CHANGE. MANY POTENTIALS OF THE DEAF CHILD WHICH WOULD RESULT IN HEALTHY COMPENSATORY BEHAVIORS PASS UNRECOGNIZED AND UNUSED. RECOGNITION OF THESE SKILLS AND INTERESTS AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RELATED ACTIVITIES CAN POSSIBLY CREATE A COMMON BASIS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN DEAF AND NORMALLY HEARING STUDENTS.

4. GROUP COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

IT IS, ADMITTEDLY DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT GROUP COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES IF THE COUNSELOR CANNOT COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE DEAF CHILD. HOWEVER, THERE IS MUCH THE CHILD CAN GAIN FROM THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES.

AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, THE DEAF CHILD IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL IS OFTEN ISOLATED FROM MEANINGFUL INTERACTION WITH HIS DEAF PEERS AS WELL AS HIS NORMALLY HEARING PEERS. GROUP COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES CAN DO MUCH TO FACILITATE THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS OF THE DEAF CHILD, AND TO ENCOURAGE SELF-EXPRESSION.

THESE GROUP ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THEY ARE TASK-ORIENTED OR WHEN A LOT OF VISUAL MATERIALS ARE USED AS A FRAME OF REFERENCE. HIGHLY VERBAL GROUP COUNSELING TECHNIQUES DO NOT WORK VERY WELL WITH SOME DEAF STUDENTS. LANGUAGE LEVELS AND ABILITIES IN SELF-EXPRESSION ARE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN USED EFFECTIVELY WITH DEAF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN GROUP COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT MANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES ARE ALSO USEFUL IN ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING WITH DEAF CHILDREN WHOSE LANGUAGE AND SELF-EXPRESSION CAPACITIES ARE LIMITED.

STRUCTURED GROUP EXPERIENCES OR GAMES ARE VERY EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES. MANY HIGHLY VERBAL "GAMES" CAN BE MODIFIED FOR USE WITH DEAF CHILDREN.

(1) NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDIA CENTER FOR THE DEAF, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS. PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION.

(2) ARGUS LIFE-LINE SERIES
- CONSEQUENCES
- MAKING SENSE OF OUR LIVES
- IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SHOES

(3) HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE. MAGIC CIRCLE ACTIVITY PROGRAM AND GUIDE.

(4) SEARCH FOR VALUES KIT

(5) DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING OF SELF AND OTHERS (DUSO) KIT

(6) THE 'COPING WITH' BOOK SERIES

(7) SRA JOB EXPERIENCE KITS

(8) VOCATIONAL EXPLORATION KIT

CONCLUSION

THESE ARE BUT A FEW BASIC IDEAS WHICH IT IS HOPED WILL SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH THOSE DEAF CHILDREN CURRENTLY ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS WELL AS THOSE WHO WILL BE MAINSTREAMED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE DEAF CHILD IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION BY VIRTUE OF THE NATURE OF HIS DISABILITY. DEAFNESS IS AN INVISIBLE DISABILITY, AND IT EFFECTS THE MEDIUM ON WHICH MAN'S INTERACTION WITH HIS ENVIRONMENT IS BASED: THAT OF HEARING, AND CONSEQUENTLY, LANGUAGE. THE EFFECTS OF IMPAIRED HEARING ON THE CHILD'S MATURATIONAL PROCESS CAN NOT BE OVERESTIMATED. THE YOUNG DEAF CHILD IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL MUST LEARN VERY EARLY, TO DEAL WITH WHAT OFTEN BECOMES A VERY ANXIETY-PROVOKING ENVIRONMENT. WITHOUT PROPER SUPPORT THE ADJUSTMENT THE CHILD MAKES IS NOT LIKELY TO BE GROWTH-PROMOTING. IT IS DECIDEDLY DIFFICULT FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT DEAF TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT. HOWEVER, AS COUNSELORS, COUNSELOR EDUCATORS, AND OTHERS IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS, WE NEED NOT ONLY TO RECOGNIZE THE CHALLENGING TASK BEFORE US, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO REALIZE THAT WITH SOME BASIC UNDERSTANDING AND A COMMITMENT TO WHAT MAY SEEM LIKE A SMALL EFFORT ON OUR PART, CAN CONTRIBUTE MUCH TO THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF DEAF CHILDREN.

MUCH OF THIS CONTRIBUTION CAN BE OBTAINED BY FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS NOT ONLY ON THE DEAF CHILD, DIRECTLY, BUT ALSO BY CONCENTRATING SOME OF OUR EFFORTS ON THOSE NORMALLY HEARING STUDENTS WHO CONSTITUTE THE DEAF CHILD'S PUBLIC. THE PROCESS MAY SEEM SLOW, AND AT TIMES DISCOURAGING, BUT EACH OF US CAN, IN MANY SMALL WAYS, PAVE THE WAY FOR A HEALTHIER,

GROWTH-PROMOTING ENVIRONMENT FOR DEAF CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

THANK YOU.